

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

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State Surgeon General & Secretary

Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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50th ANNIVERSARY SURGEON GENERAL'S REPORT

ORLANDO - The Florida Department of Health in Orange and Seminole Counties are committed with smoking cessation and smoke-free efforts to help maintain a healthy community. The U.S Surgeon General each year presents a report that highlights the tobacco efforts and data on the health consequences of tobacco use. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the first Surgeon General's Report on Smoking and Health.

January 11, 2014 marked the 50th anniversary of the first Surgeon General's Report on Smoking and Health. The 1964 landmark report, released by Surgeon General Dr. Luther Terry, was the first federal government report linking smoking and ill health, including lung cancer and heart disease. This scientifically rigorous report laid the foundation for tobacco control efforts in the United States.

"The Florida Department of Health in Orange County estimates based on national figures that the first US Surgeon General's report of 1964, has saved tens of thousands of lives in Orange County as a result of people quitting smoking or never having started," said Dr. Kevin M. Sherin, Director of the Florida Department of Health in Orange County.

"Thousands of people in our community have benefited from the reports released by the Surgeon General. These reports have engaged us in providing public health actions directed in reducing tobacco use and preventing tobacco-related diseases," said Dr. Swannie Jet, Health Officer of the Florida Department of Health in Seminole County. "We need to continue intensified and sustained efforts to prevent more people from using tobacco products, especially our youth."

In the last 50 years, 31 Surgeon General's Reports have been released, increasing our understanding of the devastating health and financial burdens caused by tobacco use. We now know that smoking causes a host of cancers and other illnesses and is still the leading preventable cause of death in the United States, killing 443,000 people each year. In Florida, considerable progress has been made in the past 50 years to reduce the harm caused by smoking. Currently, 17.7 percent of adults in Florida are smokers - a rate lower than the national average of 19.6 percent. Since 2007, 93,400 Floridians have successfully quit tobacco using one of Tobacco Free Florida's 3 Free and Easy Ways to Quit cessation services. Florida's high school smoking rate reached an all-time low of 8.6 percent in 2013, one of the lowest high school smoking rates in the country and far below the national average of 15.8 percent.

Tobacco Free Florida offers three free resources to help tobacco users quit.

- Phone: Call the Florida Quitline at 1-877-U-CAN-NOW to speak with a Quit Coach who will help assess the user's addiction and create a personalized quit plan.
- Online: Enroll in online counseling with the Florida Quitline, where each user can create a personalized, web-based quit plan. Visit <https://www.quitnow.net/florida> to enroll.

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- In-person: Visit the Florida Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) Network's website, <http://ahectobacco.com>, to locate a local AHEC and sign up for Quit Smoking Now group classes.

The Orange and Seminole Tobacco Prevention Programs work to prevent youth from starting the use of tobacco, and protect everyone from secondhand smoke by increasing awareness about the risk of tobacco use and secondhand smoke, providing cessation support and coordinating a SWAT (Students working Against Tobacco) club in middle and high schools.

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